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Letters

To the Editor:

Normally, the CIA does not respond to articles written about it. However, because Allan Goodman's article, "Dateline Langley: Fixing the Intelligence Mess," in FOREIGN POLICY 57 (Winter 1984-85), concerns an area of the agency's activities where we can speak publicly, and because the article is so inaccurate, we believe the record should be corrected.

Goodman left the agency in 1980, and his information concerning it is seriously outdated. A point-by-point rebuttal of all of Goodman's errors and recommendations would take too much time and space. Therefore, I will address only the most egregious inaccuracies.

Goodman states that the intelligence community does not study its failures and that the results of the few postmortems that have been undertaken have not been widely disseminated or discussed. But in recent years the director has assigned a senior group of distinguished officials the task not only of evaluating some 15 major historical intelligence problems but also of evaluating retrospectively at 1- and 2-year intervals virtually every estimate now prepared.

Moreover, the Directorate of Intelligence now has its own evaluation staff whose principal function is to conduct retrospective evaluations of CIA assessments on particular subjects. These evaluations are widely shared with the concerned organizations. Finally, in this connection, one of the agency's most popular training courses now is a course on intelligence successes and failures.

Goodman asserts that analysts learn to be wary of doing longer-range or in-depth studies and that the task of writing estimates and think pieces is to be avoided. He notes that most of these studies are turned out by members of a special staff and that promotions of analysts at middle and senior levels require that they take on management responsibility. But for more than 3 years now, a substantial percentage of new analytical resources has been devoted to strengthening long-term research. In the last year alone, more than 700 long-term research assessments were published. Indeed, the structure of

~~intelligence~~ has been revised in such a way that it is now more difficult to get analysts to work on short-range projects and current intelligence than on longer-term research. The special staff Goodman cites has not existed for several years, and the agency now has a number of opportunities for analysts to rise to GS-15 and even to supergrade level.

Goodman asserts that the intelligence community posts few analysts abroad and that even short field trips are hard to come by. But one of the benefits provided by new resources in recent years has been to permit significant expansion of the number of analysts assigned overseas. Moreover, for the first time there are adequate funds for analysts to travel and work overseas, often for several months at a time. Goodman's statement that analysts are generally limited to one 6-week stretch of temporary duty every 3 years or so is wrong.

Goodman also states that attempts to reach out to academics are strongly resisted and dismissed as cosmetic. But a major CIA initiative in recent years has been the dramatic expansion of its contacts not only with academics but also with think tanks and the private sector. In 1984 alone some 1,200 analysts attended nearly 500 conferences on substantive issues, many of them sponsored by universities. Moreover, analysts are now required to obtain outside training every 2 years, either through academic course work or through attendance at conferences and seminars. Many of the agency's substantive papers are now reviewed by academics. Particular emphasis is placed on seeking out scholars with a different point of view than the CIA's.

Goodman states that analysts should do more to distinguish between what they know and do not know, to identify those judgments based on specific evidence from those based on speculation, and to make projections about the future. Goodman suggests further that policymakers be given some indication of what to look for in the way of events or developments that can be used to test CIA judgments.

But one of the principal objectives of new, far more intensive, substantive review of CIA analysis is to ensure that its analysts not only are giving policymakers a more explicit description of their evidence but also are distinguishing between what is analysis and what is based on evidence, as well as stating the agency's view of the reliability of

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